

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for precipitating chitosan comprising: mixing in any order an aqueous acidic solution containing a chitosan polymer and at least one inorganic or organic salt wherein said inorganic or organic salt is present in an amount effective to salt out said chitosan polymer to form an aqueous composition which comprises at least said salted out chitosan polymer.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said inorganic or organic salt is food-compatible or suitable for biomedical applications.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said aqueous acidic solution has a pH between about 2 and about 6.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein precipitation is carried out between about 4°C and about 55 °C.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said inorganic or organic salt is selected from the group consisting of ammonium or sodium sulfate, sodium or potassium phosphates, sodium or potassium citrate, sodium tartrate, sodium malate, sodium nitrate, sodium lactate, sodium malonate, sodium succinate, sodium acetate, and sodium propionate.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said aqueous acidic solution is selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, lactic acid, malic acid and hydrochloric acid.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein a combination of at least two inorganic or organic salts is used.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said combination of salts is a combination of kosmotropic and chaotropic salts.

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9. The method of claim 1, wherein the amount of chitosan precipitated is at least 90% of the amount of chitosan in solution.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said chitosan polymer has a molecular weight of about between 7 kDa and several hundreds kDa.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said chitosan polymer has a degree of acetylation of between about 0% and about 50%.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said salted out chitosan is washed with water and separated from said aqueous acidic solution by centrifugation.

13. A chitosan preparation obtained by the method of claim 1.

14. The chitosan preparation of claim 13, wherein said preparation is suitable for human consumption and biomedical applications.

15. The chitosan preparation of claim 13, wherein said preparation is substantially free of chitosanase.

16. The chitosan preparation of claim 13, wherein said preparation is substantially free of salts.

17. The chitosan preparation of claim 12, wherein said chitosan has conserved its physicochemical properties after precipitation.

18. The chitosan preparation of claim 12, wherein said preparation is soluble in the aqueous acidic milieu of the stomach.

19. A chitosan preparation which:

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- i) is substantially free of chitosanase;
- ii) is suitable for human consumption;
- iii) is soluble in an aqueous acidic milieu such as in the stomach; and
- iv) is substantially free of precipitating salts.